



# Indiana State Department of Health

## Epidemiology Resource Center

### Quick Facts

#### About Bovine Tuberculosis

##### What is bovine tuberculosis?

Bovine tuberculosis is a bacterial disease of cattle that can also infect humans, other domestic animals, and some wildlife. It has been found in whitetail deer in Northeast Michigan and recently in farmed cervids (deer and elk) and cattle located in Indiana. These farms were depopulated, cleaned, and disinfected. Indiana is currently free of the disease. The bacterium that causes this disease, *Mycobacterium bovis*, is closely related to *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, the bacterium that causes human tuberculosis. Humans rarely get bovine tuberculosis.

##### How is bovine tuberculosis spread?

There are three ways humans can get bovine tuberculosis:

- Inhaling air contaminated with the bacteria after an infected animal or infected person coughs or sneezes very close by. It is very unlikely that an individual would contract tuberculosis from an animal by this method.
- Drinking unpasteurized milk from an infected cow or eating raw or undercooked meat from an infected animal.
- By handling infected meat in the dressing and processing of animal carcasses, especially if hands aren't washed carefully.

##### What are the signs of bovine tuberculosis in humans?

The symptoms are similar to those of human tuberculosis:

- cough
- fever
- night sweats
- fatigue
- weight loss, without dieting

### **How do I know if I have bovine tuberculosis?**

See your health care provider. Be sure to inform your health care provider if you have consumed unpasteurized milk or eaten undercooked meat. Your health care provider will conduct a physical exam and may have laboratory testing done to determine if you have bovine tuberculosis.

### **How can bovine tuberculosis be treated?**

Antibiotics are used to treat bovine tuberculosis. A health care provider can prescribe the appropriate medications.

### **How is bovine tuberculosis prevented?**

Animals that aren't healthy or have lesions suggestive of tuberculosis in the lungs, body organs, bones, or on the interior surface of the rib cage should not be consumed for food. Because tuberculosis lesions may not always be visible, all venison should be thoroughly cooked until there are no pink areas remaining and all juices run clear. Venison should not be smoked or made into jerky or sausage that will not be thoroughly cooked. Fully cooking venison will kill any bovine tuberculosis bacteria present as well as any other disease causing bacteria.

Always thoroughly wash hands with soap and water after field dressing or handling any carcass or other raw meat. This practice should always be followed, even if the animal appears healthy.

All information presented is intended for public use. For more information, please refer to:

[http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Factsheets/pdfs/bovine\\_tuberculosis.pdf](http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Factsheets/pdfs/bovine_tuberculosis.pdf)

<http://www.in.gov/boah/2396.htm>